

Appl. No. 09/944,217
Amendment dated April 23, 2004
Reply to Office Action of June 19, 2003

Remarks

Claims 1-3, 5-12 and 14-31 are pending in the application, with claims 1 and 15 being the independent claims. Claims 4 and 13 were previously canceled. Claims 4-6, 13, 16, 17 and 23-28 are withdrawn from consideration.

Based on the present Amendment and the following Remarks, Applicant respectfully requests that the Examiner reconsider all outstanding objections and rejections and that they be withdrawn.

Objection to the Claims

Claims 18 and 19 have been amended as suggested by the Examiner to overcome the objection.

Rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 112

Claims 19-22 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph, as being indefinite.

Claim 19 recites first and second pairs of rolls and further recites that the pairs are located on different sides of the path. By way of example and explanation, the first pair of rolls 9, 11 and the second pair of rolls 13, 14 are shown in Fig. 1. Rolls 9, 11 are above the strip (i.e., above the path) and rolls 13, 14 are below the strip (i.e., below the path). Thus, the rolls are on different sides of the path.

Claim 19 formerly recited "a second pair of rolls each engaging a different one of the strips." Claim 19 has been amended for clarity to recite "a second pair of rolls, each of the second pair of rolls engaging a different one of the strips." As shown in Fig. 1, roll 13 and roll 14 each engage different strips 3 and 4.

Accordingly, as presently amended, claim 19 is definite.

Rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 102

Claims 1-3, 7-12, 14-15, 18-22, and 29-31 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 4,627,319 to Mattei et al. ("Mattei").

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The rejections under 35 U.S.C. §102, or in the alternative under 35 U.S.C. §103, are being appealed. An Appeal Brief is being filed concurrently.

Entry of Amendments

Entry of the present amendments are respectfully requested as placing the application in better condition for appeal.

If the Examiner believes, for any reason, that personal communication will expedite prosecution of this application, the Examiner is hereby invited to telephone the undersigned at the number provided.

Respectfully submitted,

Date: 04/23/04



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